



TITLE:

A Comparative Study of Tag Questions and Invariant Tags in Asian Englishes: A Corpus-Based Analysis(Digest_要約)

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CITATION:

Takahashi, Mariko. A Comparative Study of Tag Questions and Invariant Tags in Asian Englishes: A Corpus-Based Analysis. 京都大学, 2016, 博士(人間・環境学)

ISSUE DATE:

2016-03-23

URL:

<https://doi.org/10.14989/doctor.k19797>

RIGHT:

学位規則第9条第2項により要約公開; 許諾条件により要旨は2016-03-24に公開

論 文 要 約

論文題目 A Comparative Study of Tag Questions and Invariant Tags in Asian Englishes:
A Corpus-Based Analysis
(アジア英語における付加疑問文と不変化タグの比較研究：
コーパスに基づく分析)

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論文要約

This dissertation aims to describe, analyze, and compare the features and functions of tag questions and invariant tags in Asian Englishes. Tag questions and invariant tags are pragmalinguistic features used to add attitudinal stances to utterances. Tag questions refer to a category of interrogative constructions consisting of a main clause (anchor) and a tag, and the auxiliary and the pronoun in tags typically correspond to the verb and the pronoun used in their anchor (e.g., Huddleston, 2002). Invariant tags refer to a group of discourse markers which attach to utterances and whose forms remain the same regardless of the main clause to which they are attached (e.g., Columbus, 2009).

There is an abundant literature on tag questions in native varieties of English (e.g., Algeo, 1990; Holmes, 1995; Kimps, 2007; Násslin, 1984; Tottie & Hoffmann, 2006), but studies on tag questions in non-native varieties of English (e.g., Cheng and Warren, 2001; Wong, 2007) are fewer. Previous studies on invariant tags (e.g., Norrick, 1995; Gold, 2004) have mainly focused on the description and analysis of invariant tags in a single variety of English, and comparative studies (e.g., Columbus, 2009; 2010) are still limited. In order to fill the gap in the literature, this dissertation set three objectives: 1) To describe, analyze, and compare the features and functions of tag questions in Hong Kong English, Philippine English, Indian English, Singapore English, and Canadian English; 2) To describe, analyze, and compare the features and functions of invariant tags in the above varieties of English; 3) To describe and analyze the features and functions of tag questions and invariant tags in Japanese English and compare the results with those of the other English varieties.

This study selected four Outer Circle Englishes and one Expanding Circle English in Asia, namely, Hong Kong English, Philippine English, Indian English, Singapore English, and Japanese English for analysis. A native variety of English, namely, Canadian English was

also included in order to enable comparison with a native variety of English. The data on Hong Kong English, Philippine English, Indian English, Singapore English, and Canadian English were extracted from the corresponding components of the International Corpus of English (see, Greenbaum, 1996) by using AntConc (Anthony, 2011), and the data on Japanese English were extracted from the NICT JLE corpus (Izumi, Uchimoto, & Isahara, 2004) by using the analysis software provided with the corpus. The extracted data on tag questions and invariant tags were then analyzed quantitatively as well as qualitatively. The functions of invariant tags were analyzed qualitatively.

The results indicate that English speakers use tag questions primarily in dialogues, but there are differences as well as similarities among the varieties regarding their specific features. Speakers of Asian varieties of English tend to anchor tags on positive constructions, thus producing positive-negative or positive-positive tag questions frequently. However, speakers of Hong Kong English and Singapore English prefer to use constant polarity tag questions at a higher rate compared to speakers of Philippine English, Indian English, Japanese English, and Canadian English. Speakers of the former two varieties use *is it* as the tag part of tag questions most frequently, while speakers of the latter four varieties use *isn't it* most frequently. At the same time, BE and DO are two auxiliary types that frequently appear in tags across the varieties. Likewise, *it* and *you* are two pronoun types that are frequently used in tags regardless of the variety. However, compared to Canadian English speakers, speakers of Asian varieties of English have a stronger tendency to select a tag with a BE auxiliary when they produce tag questions. The rate of agreement between anchors and tags is the highest in tag questions in Canadian English, closely followed by those in Japanese English. Among Asian Englishes in the Outer Circle, this rate of agreement is significantly higher in tag questions in Philippine English and Hong Kong English compared with those in Singapore English and Indian English.

The primary function of most tag questions is informational, confirmatory, facilitative, or attitudinal in all the varieties analyzed in the present study. However, speakers of Singapore English and Indian English in particular tend to use tag questions frequently for different purposes. Speakers of Singapore English use confirmatory tag questions at a higher rate and use facilitative and attitudinal tag questions at a lower rate than speakers of Indian English. On the other hand, the proportion of tag questions in each functional category does not differ significantly between Singapore English and Hong Kong English, indicating that

Singapore English speakers and Hong Kong English speakers tend to use tag questions for similar purposes. In addition, speakers of these two varieties also share the tendency to use constant polarity tag questions for informational or confirmatory meaning, whereas speakers of the other varieties use reversed polarity tag questions more frequently than constant polarity tag questions regardless of the function.

Invariant tags are observed in all the English varieties analyzed in the present study. The following 39 forms of invariant tags were identified at least once in at least one of the corpora: a, accha, ah, ahn, ano, ba, di ba, e, eh, ha, haan, hah, hai na, hindi ba, hor, huh, la, lah, lang, leh, lo, lor, mah, meh, na, na lang, naman, ne, no, 'no, okay/OK, right, see, wah, what, yeah, yes, you know, and you see. The data indicate that invariant tags can be classified into indigenous invariant tags and non-indigenous invariant tags. Indigenous invariant tags are unique to certain varieties of Asian English, and they are derived from or closely related to indigenous languages of the area. On the other hand, non-indigenous invariant tags are observed across non-native and native varieties of English. Diverse forms of invariant tags are observed in each variety, especially in Singapore English and Philippine English.

English speakers use invariant tags primarily in certain situations such as direct conversations, telephone calls, class lessons, unscripted speeches, and product demonstrations. Most indigenous invariant tags are used in informal contexts. The main functions of invariant tags such as seeking confirmation, eliciting agreement, and adding emphasis are observed across the English varieties, yet there are some differences among them regarding the preferred form used for expressing certain attitudes. In addition, speakers of Asian Englishes use indigenous invariant tags to add subtle attitudinal stances which cannot be effectively expressed by non-indigenous invariant tags.

It is not always possible to identify specific reasons why particular linguistic features of indigenized Englishes have developed. This is because multiple factors such as the influence of indigenous languages and cultures, the tendency toward simplification, and the need to maintain intelligibility can all contribute to the development of indigenous features (e.g., Kirkpatrick, 2007). The influence of substrate languages is explored in this study as a potential explanation for the similarities and differences of tag questions in Asian Englishes. However, direct influence of corresponding constructions in indigenous languages is not observed in tag questions in any of the varieties. On the other hand, indigenous invariant tags are closely associated with indigenous languages of the area. Schneider's dynamic model on

the developmental phases of Englishes (e.g., Schneider, 2003; 2007; 2010; 2014) is also briefly explored as a potential explanation. Although it is difficult to explain specific similarities and differences of tag questions and invariant tags based on this holistic model, the rate of agreement between anchors and tags in tag questions seems to become lower with the progression of nativization. In addition, acceptability of the use of indigenous invariant tags in English conversations seems to become higher as nativization progresses.

This study has shown that speakers of Asian varieties of English use tag questions and invariant tags in communication with varying degrees. This study has pointed out that distinctive characteristics of tag questions and invariant tags can be observed, especially in Asian Englishes in the Outer Circle.